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PARIS FOR EMBASSY AND USRO

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Following are working level comments on British memorandum on Berlin made
November 21
~~addressed~~ to British and French.

There are many motives, all sound from Soviet viewpoint, which could lead Soviets to exploit difficulties implicit in West's commitment to freedom of citizens 100 miles inside Communist territory. We can only speculate why Soviets chose this particular moment to launch course of action which could have been undertaken at any moment for years past. Developments since Khrushchev November 10 speech leave no doubt firm Soviet intention to hand over to GDR responsibility for functions concerning Berlin now performed by Soviet organs. Exact timing, and diplomatic cover to be thrown over action by Soviets not yet clear.

We consider immediate target is Allied communications with Berlin, rather than a blockade of the inhabitants of Berlin.

We

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We read memorandum as agreeing with us that under no circumstances could we permit creation of situation in which freedom of West Berlin compromised by starvation or otherwise. At appropriate point we would resort to force to make good on our commitment.

Our fundamental difficulty with UK memorandum is that alternative chosen (unrestrained dealing with GDR up to and including recognition if necessary) does not solve basic problem. It only postpones for a longer or shorter period point at which choice again becomes use of force or further yielding to pressure to save the city for the West. For it is our conviction that any arrangements with GDR can only be temporary however ironclad they may seem. Berlin will still be isolated from rest of free world. Arguing from the intolerability of a foreign enclave within its territory, GDR backed by Soviets, can hardly be expected to exercise self-restraint necessary for stabilization of Berlin situation for very long.

Thus, following British line, you arrive at best at temporary point of stabilization. Since reunification (only real long-term solution Berlin problem) not envisaged within period temporary East-West truce over Berlin, dealing with GDR hardly justified as measure to gain time.

Moreover, UK estimate and ours of damage done to Western position by unrestrained dealing with GDR must be quite different. For the sake of a temporary period of stabilization (the effective duration of which is still left fundamentally to ~~the~~ Soviets and ~~the~~ GDR) we will have compromised position on dealing with GDR with all that this implies in connection Allied-German relations and Allied prestige in rest of world.

Recognition

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Recognition of GDR (and it would have to come to this ultimately, we think, however hard we resisted it) would accomplish a fundamental change in Soviet-Satellite relationships of inestimable advantage to ~~the~~ Soviets and corresponding detriment to West. While Three Powers would no doubt be lauded in some quarters for having taken up QUOTE realistic UNQUOTE position in order ~~to~~ avoid use of force, with all its implication in nuclear age, a staggering blow would have been dealt to confidence reposed by our Allies and rest of Free World in our firmness in ~~the~~ face of threats, in a situation in which our legal right to insist on ~~the~~ status quo was fairly precise.

~~The~~ Goal of German reunification on any terms suitable to ~~the~~ West would have been practically surrendered. ~~The~~ Soviets would have proved their thesis that reunification was a task for the two Germanies, each sovereign and able ~~to~~ take its place at ~~the~~ negotiating table as equals.

Hester

ACTING

(FDK)